

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 12 remain pending, and claim 9-11 are canceled. Claims 1, 5, and 12 are currently amended. No claims are added.

Claim 12 stands withdrawn from consideration as describing an invention that is independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed during prosecution. Specifically, claim 12 was deemed to describe a subcombination of the combination described by claims 1-11, and claim 12 was further deemed to describe the subcombination in such a way that it had utility separate from that of the combination, while claims 1-11 were deemed to describe the combination without the particulars of the subcombination.

With the present amendments, claim 12 no longer describes an invention that is independent or distinct from the invention described by claims 1-8 (claims 9-11 are canceled, as noted above). For example, all pending claims recite (either explicitly or by dependency) that a user is enabled to assign identification information different from identification information used in a network.

Applicant acknowledges, of course, that the claims have *some* difference in scope, as is required under 35 U.S.C. § 101. However, regardless of whether the claims can still be divided into groups of combination and subcombination, MPEP § 806.05(c) only permits restriction if explicit conditions are met. (Note, for example, section I, which prohibits restriction when a combination sets forth the details of the subcombination.)

In view of the claim amendments, applicant requests that claim 12 be joined with the examined group and examined itself.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Nakamura, U.S. Patent No. 6,516,347, in view of Ylonen, U.S. Patent Application Publication No.

2004/0250072, and further in view of Murphy et al., U.S. Patent 6,076,110. Because claims 9-11 are now canceled, their rejection is moot. Regarding claims 1-8, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4 each describe a method for managing a plurality of network devices. In this method, management equipment sets identification information to each network device. With the present amendments, claims 1-4 explicitly specify that the method includes:

displaying said identification information on said network device, if no operation is performed for a predetermined time period when the network device displays a device setting ...

Claims 5-8 each describe a network management system having a plurality of network devices. This system includes management equipment for setting identification information to each network device. With the present amendments, claims 5-8, explicitly specify that:

... said identification information is displayed on said network device, if no operation is performed for a predetermined time period when the network device displays a device setting ...

Applicant respectfully submits that none of Nakamura, Ylonen, and Murphy et al., either alone or combined, teach or suggest the claimed subject matter quoted above. Accordingly, the obviousness rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the present remarks, applicant submits that the entire application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowability is now requested. If the Examiner believes that issues remain unresolved, he is welcome to contact the undersigned.

If necessary, the undersigned authorizes deducting any fees that may be due from Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,
WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph L. Felber", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Enclosure: Petition for Extension of Time

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